

GUIDE TO THE RH1 CAUCASIA FILE

[Caucasia is a part of the modern USSR. The RH1 Caucasias file is concerned with the region of the Caucasus Mountains and its people as a whole, including their condition under Soviet rule. Caucasias is a geographically diverse area located between the Eurasian steppe belt on the north and the fertile crescent in the south. It is bordered by the Black Sea on the west, by the Caspian Sea on the east, and on the south by Turkey and Iran.

The Caucasian region is noted for its extreme ethnic and linguistic diversity. The ethnic groups fall into the general categories of Russians, Georgians, Armenians, and Tatars. There are 50 indigenous languages. Religions represented include Zoroastrianism, several branches of Christianity, both Sunni and Shi'ite branches of Islam, and Judaism. The Caucasus is known as one of the great cross-roads of history. The north has witnessed successive waves of nomads spreading from Asia to Europe. Before Soviet rule, the region was predominantly agricultural. In 1923, it was estimated that 75-80% of the population was engaged in animal or vegetable production. Horse and cattle breeding were especially important. Under the Soviet regime agriculture and cattle-breeding are still practiced but the dominant economic fact is increasing industrialization.

There are four sources in the file, numbered 3, 5, 7 and 8. Ethnographic data on northern Caucasian marriage, family, and customary law will be found in 8: Luzbetak. Source 7: Columbia University is a lengthy monograph

on ethnography, history, economics, and politics. Sources number 5 and 3 provide background on the history and economy of the region until the early 1920's. The file was processed in 1955-56.]